

The Linacre Quarterly

Volume 55 | Number 2

Article 4

May 1988

From the Editor's Desk

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Recommended Citation

Mullooly, John P. (1988) "From the Editor's Desk," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 55: No. 2, Article 4.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol55/iss2/4>

From the Editor's Desk



“The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance”

In these days of moral confusion, it is heartening to know that there is one agency in the world which has been founded and is continually sustained and inspired to give witness to the truth — the Church.

It was founded by Christ, the only Son of God. He promised us, the members of His Church, that He would be with us to the very end and that the gates of Hell would not prevail against us. Through the Holy Spirit, we would be given the strength of His grace to persevere and to enlarge the Kingdom to embrace all of God's creatures in His saving mission. It is good to reflect upon these truths, for it revivifies our faith in the present and in the future. The mission of the Church is to save souls, to insist on the dignity and sacredness of each and every human being and to bring each of God's creatures to Himself. When Christ died for our sins, He redeemed us to Himself so that we would be with Him forever.

As we contemplate the modern medico-moral scene and reflect upon what the Church has to say about it, one thing and one thing alone stands out above the cacaphony of modern discourse — the humanity and dignity and sacredness of each and every human life which God has created. This awesome dignity and sacredness with which God endows His creatures must be respected and valued by all of us, for it is God's commandment that we do so. Flowing reasonably from this perspective, the Church's approach to medical-moral issues unfolds and finds concrete formulations in moral norms. These moral norms laid down over the centuries resonate with the underlying dignity and sacredness of each human life. With this in

mind, it is eminently reasonable for the Church to be totally opposed to the destruction of human life as we see in its opposition to abortion; to be totally opposed to surrogate motherhood, in which a child-to-be is deprived of its own rights to have its own mother and father; to be opposed to assisted suicide and active euthanasia; to nontherapeutic experimentation upon unborn life, and to in vitro fertilization. In all of these areas, the dignity, respect for and sacredness of life are violated. The underlying reasoning behind these positions of the Church has been and will continue to be elucidated in the *Linacre Quarterly*, and it is important for all men of good will to try to understand the Church's reasoning and commitment. The Church does not look for popularity in taking these positions. Rather, it is committed to giving witness to the truth and, perforce, must stand as a sign of contradiction to modern trends and self-destructive human desires, much as Christ did in standing up to the Pharisees and Sadducees so long ago.

For those of us who are committed to the truth and the Church's vision of the dignity and sacredness of human life, it was most encouraging to see the American Medical Association recommitting itself in its stand against active euthanasia at its last House of Delegates meeting in Atlanta in December, 1987. Active euthanasia or assisted suicide is incompatible with the physician's role as a healer and violates his Hippocratic Oath. The AMA's reaffirmation of its traditional stand came in response to a plea from the California House of Delegates which condemned a referendum in California to allow for active euthanasia. The efforts of various pressure groups in our society to have such legislation for active euthanasia is picking up steam. It is important for us to fight these efforts with all the help that God can give us. For active euthanasia is but a sign that our civilization will descend into a new Dark Age, reminiscent of the barbarism which characterized Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 40s.

As you all remember, this utter disrespect for human life began with the concept of a German psychiatrist that there were lives unworthy to be lived. This concept soon found acceptance within the German medical profession and was soon accepted by the Hitler-dominated German Reich. The rest is history and remains as a blot and stain upon what was once a proud profession. The elimination of defective children, mentally ill adults and then gypsies, Jews and political dissidents soon followed and reached horrifying proportions. The sickening, soul-destroying campaign unleashed by a government upon humanity is a memory which is ever-present in our minds and is something none of us should forget. The potential for assaults upon the dignity and sacredness of human life are present in our society and it is incumbent upon society, the media, the professions to recognize this threat to humanity for what it is.

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance" is inscribed on a plaque on the entrance to Archives of the United States in Washington, DC, in which are preserved the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. How true these words are when we ponder the movements in our society to

vitiating the dignity and sacredness of human life from its moment of conception until its natural death in old age. This is the time for our society to pray and work for itself, to preserve itself in the image and likeness of God and free itself from all of its self-destructive tendencies. It is a time to reaffirm our belief in the providence of God and commit ourselves and future generations to His love and care and to save ourselves from ourselves in His redemptive love.

— John P. Mullooly, M.D.
Editor

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Please note:

The Festival of Life International Congress sponsored by the FIAMC Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Bombay, has been rescheduled for Dec. 10-14, 1988. The postponement was caused by a severe, widespread drought in India resulting in government-announced austerity measures including the postponement of all seminars and conferences to the next financial year. The Festival of Life was originally set for December, 1987, in Bombay.

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